

A
 REVIEW
 OF THE
 STATE
 OF THE
 BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, August 5. 1708.

IT is impossible for any Man that writes, to prevent the Readers making wrong Constructions of Words, and especially when Prejudice joins with the Defect of their Consideration—And therefore when an Author is misunderstood, all the Remedy which is left him, is to explain himself.

This is my Case in the Affair of the Charity collected for the Episcopal Clergy in Scotland, which it seems, as some have misconstrued, as if I would discourage any Body from administering to the Necessities of People in Distress; I bless GOD, I have learn'd two Lessons in the World, 1. To pray for them that despightfully use me; and 2. If my Enemy hunger to feed him. In the next Place I abhor from my Soul the Prin-

ciple of Persecution for Conscience, and think it contrary to the Principles of the Christian Religion, as, by the way, was once put into the Preface to the Occasional Bill, tho' afterwards it appear'd so unlike the Bill it self, that the Authors were ashamed of it, and left it out.

I lately printed three Reviews at three several Times, in which I have said something of this Charity, and of the Collection for the Episcopal Clergy in Scotland—And I am very sorry to hear, that any one should take occasion to lessen their Charity, or slacken their Hands on that Occasion from my Word, since whoever impartially reads those three Papers, will find, I never design'd to suggest, the People in Distress should

should not be reliev'd; and therefore I must now look back a little, in order to lead you into the Story, and examine, what I have wrote in that Case, and then give you some Account of Matters of Fact to set this Case right in the World again, for I see People are mighty easie to find an Excuse for their Charity.

And first to look back on what I have said in the *Review* of the 7th of Feb. 1707, N°. 155, Vol. IV. I was there oblig'd to reply to Mr. *Rebearsal*, who had charg'd the *Presbyterians* with Cruelty to the Episcopal Clergy in *Scotland*, and had mention'd this Charity; and not to repeat the whole Story, I stated the Case thus.

That in the Language of Mr. *Rebearsal*, with his bloody and cruel Persecutions, and collecting Charity for Persons, under such a Condition I knew nothing of it, but knew there was no such thing, and added these Words, which I desire all People that are disposed to relieve Men in Distress to read again.

" If they mean by persecuted Ministers —
 " such as at the Revolution were by the
 " Government turn'd out of their Livings,
 " for refusing to conform to Presbytery; it
 " is plain, no Body ever oppos'd collecting
 " Charities to relieve them, and very good
 " Certificates might, I believe, be obtain'd
 " from them of the Charity of the present
 " Ministers of the Establish'd Church in
 " *Scotland*, who have largely contributed
 " to their Subsistence — In short, if by
 " your Collections you mean a Charity to
 " support the Families of the Episcopal
 " Clergy deposed by the Revolution,
 " AMEN, I shall not only approve, but
 " assist in it, and encourage it all I can.
 " GOD FORBID, I should discourage
 " any Man's Charity in relieving a Family
 " that wants, or that has lost its Subsistence,
 " whether it were on a Politick
 " Scruple or a Religious, and I would do
 " the same if they were Roman-Catholicks.

Thus far this *Review* — On the 28th of the same Month of February, comes a Letter to me from a Person well-known in *London* — In which Notice is taken of the large Collections making all over *England* for the persecuted Clergy in *Scotland*, and it being at the Time when the Rumour

of the French Preparations was encreasing, the People, as he says in the said Letter, took some Umbrage at the large Collections made for the *Scott* persecuted Clergy, as a Thing which might be a Cover to raising Money for the Enemy.

I do not say there was any Ground for such a Jealousie. But two Things were very unhappy in this Suggestion, and this I took Notice of; 1. that they made this Collection without any Brief, 2. that they boasted of great Sums collected, this Letter saying, the Minister of that one Parish had collected 40*l*. and these Sums were afterwards noised about to an extravagant Height, such as I think, I may venture to own were improbable.

Yet in Answer to this Letter, did I say nothing to deter or discourage People, either from collecting or contributing to the Relief of those who were really necessitous — but argued how reasonable it had been for them to have obtain'd a Brief for the Collection, which would have taken away all Suspicion, which it was plain, the Want of it expos'd them to reminding them, that two Things would be very naturally enquir'd of every Collector of this Charity; 1. What Authority he had for collecting it. 2. How it should be assur'd the Money should be rightly employ'd? and there I left it.

In a third *Review* of May 1st. I mention'd this Affair again, having been jesting about the great Contribution of the Pope to the French Invasion, in which nevertheless for aught I know, his Holiness may be wrong'd too — And yet in this I did not offer to object against any Man's Charity, only move the Gentlemen who have been forward in it, to give the World what Satisfaction they can, of the Money collected being rightly apply'd.

Thus far the History of my concerning myself in this Matter, which if any Body shall improve to lessen their Charity for Men and Families in Distress, they either had but small Charity, and were willing to lay hold of any Excuse to put a Check to it, or they very much wrong me in taking my Words quite another way than they were intended.

After

After all therefore I shall explain my self, and state this Case, so as I hope shall clear it effectually up, and that no Man shall have a sufficient Ground of Exception from me against any of his good Designs.

And first I say again, I am far from discouraging the Charity of any People to the Families of the Deposed Clergy in Scotland; be it that I differ from them in Judgment, be it that I never so heartily join in their Fall—They are, I hope, *Christians*, they are *Men*, *Fellow Creatures*, they were *Men bred to Letters*, not to Labour, and I cannot think, they are by any Manner of Circumstances excluded from our Compassion as Christians.

In the next Place many of them are dead, and their Families and Widows are in Distress enough, and these call for Compassion, having been tenderly bred when their Parents or Husbands liv'd in Plenty, and knew no Want—He that shuts up his Bowels against such as these, let him read that Scripture which ought to startle him, *How dwelleth the Love of God in him?*

As to those that will have this call'd a Collection for the suffering Ministers under the cruel and barbarous Persecutions of the *Presbyterians*; let me say two or three Things to such.

1. *It is false in Fact*—The deposing them being the only Persecution they suffer—And do not ye the same? O ye *Highest Flyers* of the Church of England, nay worse, do you suffer one *Non-juror* in England to enjoy his Benefice? Do you suffer one of them to preach in private without immediate Prosecution, and routing them out as *Jacobite* Conventicles? What, is it Persecution in Scotland, and nothing at all in England? For shame forbear your Partiality, and either cease to call the deposing the Episcopal Clergy in Scotland Persecution, or restore the *Non-jurant* Clergy in England to their Livings.

2. The Episcopal Clergy in Scotland do not desire, you should give them all these Epithets, *their Distresses are not the less*, tho' they are no otherwise persecuted than depos'd—And they are modest enough in their Representation of their Case, and it is their Desire you would be so too, nay, 'tis their Injury when you are otherwise.

3. The *Presbyterians* in Scotland are now so far from persecuting them, that they contribute very frankly and largely every Year to this very Collection I am now speaking of, and I have the Authority of some of the Episcopal Ministers in Scotland, who are employ'd in this Charity, to say, and some of them made it their Request to me, when I was in Scotland, that when I had any Occasion to mention this Matter again, I would tell the World, that they do acknowledge, that the *Presbyterians* in Scotland, both Ministers and People, do contribute largely and frankly to their Relief—To make this an individious Case in England therefore does them Harm and not Good; for where it excites the Charity of one Man, it may tie up the Hands of others.

But again I must say to those that have boasted so much of their great Collections, as one in the Letter printed of 40*l.* and another of 100*l.* and others in Proportion.

—You have done very ill; For,

1. It cannot be true that you have collected such Sums, much less the great Sums common Fame has spoken of, since I am well assur'd, and it is lately made publick, that the whole Collection made throughout England this Year does not amount to 500*l.* and if it be not true, that you have collected it, you do the poor People an unspeakable Injury to boast of it.

2. If it be true you have collected it, it must be As true you have defrauded the Poor of it, for we have it under the Hand of the Reverend Dr. Scot in his Letter to the Author of this Paper, that 300*l.* is the utmost of all the Money which has been collected for them for the whole Year. From whence it must follow, that if half the Money, which has been boasted of, has been collected in England, the Episcopal Clergy in Scotland have been barbarously treated; so that take it which way you will, the Conduct has been ill, either you have bely'd your Labours, and boasted of more Money than ever you collected, or else you have gather'd the Money, and cheated the Poor.

Now I must do another Piece of Justice to the People in Scotland, who are thus seeking your Charity, and the Administra-